

## CHAPTER 1:

### YOU CAN EVEN

Something very bad has happened. For the loss of a word or phrase to explain your emotions, you shouted out “I can’t even!” By doing this, you have subjected yourself to the Even Conundrum. There are five stages in the Even Conundrum:



## CHAPTER 2:

### DENIAL IS NOT JUST A RIVER IN EGYPT

Let us start with number one, Denial. The first reaction of learning that something isn’t right is to deny the reality of the situation. It is not a mark of bravery to ignore the opportunity to regain your ability to even. Still, it is a completely normal reaction. For example, say the barista spelled your name wrong on your Pumpkin Spice Latte. You will first deny what is happening, “OMG, he couldn’t have spelled my name wrong”, and try to rationalize it, “Well, if you squint your eyes the ‘E’ kinda looks like a ‘Y’.” Then, once you realize that the “E” is not a “Y”, you will try to hide it. You don’t want people to see your name spelled wrong on your perfect spiced drink! You will try to cover it with a cardboard sleeve, or your hand, or cross it out with your own marker. However, the best thing for you to do at this time is to tell your friends and family. They can help you accept what is going on.

## CHAPTER 3:

### MAKING YOUR ANGRY FACE

Anger at Others is the next step in the Even Conundrum. As the effects of Denial and Isolation begin to wear, reality and its pain re-emerge. This comes all too soon, catching you off guard. This intense emotion is expressed instead as anger. Your anger may be aimed at your Pumpkin drink, the barista, or your friends and family. You know that there is no one to blame (except for that barista) and that you should just move on, but you can't. There is a rage building up inside of you, blinding your vision with red! You might feel guilty for being angry, and that will make you more angry. The best thing for you to do is to take many deep breaths and close your eyes. Imagine your anger as a giant punching bag. Throw everything you have at it, get it all out! When you feel better, open your eyes and take a few more deep breaths. Then you are able to move to the next step.

## CHAPTER 4:

### SHUT UP AND TAKE MY MONEY

Bargaining with Money comes next. You might want to get back in line to get another latte, or you might want to just throw it away and be done with it. This is normal, and it will help you regain your ability to even. However, don't linger on it for too long. You could get caught up in this stage, and lose track of what is really important, your recovery. Secretly, you might make a deal with your God or our higher power to change it, blinking between each prayer to see if your plea was answered. Your body is running out of excuses, and you are so close to the end. After you realize it will not change, no amount of pleading can do it, you will move on to Rejection of Reality.

## CHAPTER 5:

### THE BLUE PILL (NOT VIAGRA)

Rejection of Reality is the most crushing of all the steps. There are two types of rejection. The first type is a reaction to your grief. Sadness and regret build up until they threaten to overcome you. You will worry about the unimportant things, like how much money was wasted on your Pumpkin Spice Latte. You may worry that you have been pushing away your friends and family who want to support you. This phase can be eased by clarification and reassurance. Talk to your friends and family. They need you as much as you need them. As much as you feel like others shouldn't be bothered with your problem, they are the ones who can ease your pain and suffering. The second type of rejection is more subtle and more private. It is our quiet preparation to start accepting your problem. This is the toughest part of Rejection of Reality. You can't explain it to others to ask, and you feel like you are alone in your struggle. Sometimes all you need is a hug and a North Face padded shoulder to cry on.

## CHAPTER 6:

### ACCEPTING YOUR EVEN SIDE

Finally, Acceptance with Yourself is the longest of all the steps. Not many people can reach this step in the first place. But it is almost over. You are closer than ever to being able to even. You can see the bright white light at the end of the tunnel, and you are running towards it in your Uggs with your arms out wide. You must fight the urge to forget to even, and want deep down to regain your precious ability. To the outsider, you will show symptoms of calmness and acknowledgment. Many people will take this as a sign that you are cured, that you can even again. But you aren't at that point yet. You are hanging from your metaphorical cross, "literally dying" from the stress and depression. Deep inside of yourself, you are fighting a battle that only you can decide the outcome of. Coping with your loss is a deeply personal experience, nobody can help you through it more easily or understand all the emotions that you're going through. But your friends and family will be there to help and comfort you through your problem. The best thing you can do is to allow yourself to feel the emotions as they come over you. Resisting it only will prolong the process of your healing.



You



Can!



Even

A guide for people who  
have lost the  
ability to even



Written by Zach Phillips

## CHAPTER 7:

### NEVER NOT EVEN AGAIN

After you have completed the final step in the Even Conundrum, you will regain your ability to even. You are now cured. Congratulations! After your healing process is complete, you should lay down and relax to let your body heal from this traumatic experience. You will feel like you have taken a sledgehammer to both your physical and mental self. You will never want to feel that way again. Thankfully, there is a way to avoid losing your ability to even! Follow these steps if you ever start feeling like you “can’t even!”

- 1) *Close your eyes*
- 2) *Lower your chin to your chest*
- 3) *Take a deep breath*
- 4) *Count to five in your head*
- 5) *Open your eyes, look up, and smile*
- 6) *Repeat until the feeling has passed*

## CHAPTER 8:

### HELPING OTHERS FIND THEIR EVEN

If anyone you know has lost their ability to even, respect their space until they have accepted their loss and regained their ability to even. Everyone will deal with their loss differently. Remember what you have gone through, and try to empathize with them. Try to track what stage of the Even Conundrum they are in to better help them towards acceptance. When everything is over, you will have your friend or family member back. Don’t rush their recovery.